

# Jackson County courts

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## to soon go online

By Christina Paulsell  
The Examiner

Millions of sites are on the Internet, and the Jackson County Courthouse will soon add one more.

In the first week of November, the civil records and probate divisions of the Jackson County Courthouse will be on the Internet. Jackson County will become the second county in the state to have an online case management system.

Tracy Syman, communications counsel for the Supreme Court of Missouri, said the case management system was a part of complete court automation for the state. She said courts statewide should be online by 2001.

Syman said the system should

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JUDGE WILLIAM F. MAUER  
Associate Circuit Court

have been online this week in Jackson County, but officials decided to hold off to verify information before relying on it full time. She said it should be operating by Nov. 6.

Syman said the time will be used to move old data to the new system, verify all the information and train the courthouse staff.

Mary Ann McClure, Director of Civil Records for Jackson County,

said the computers are in and being tested for data validation.

"It's looking pretty good," McClure said.

She said it has meant eight weeks of training and practice to learn the new system. She said most of the records personnel were saying it was like learning a new job.

"Everybody is pretty excited about it," McClure said. "It's being well received."

Syman said once online, judges, attorneys and the general public will be able to access the system from any computer. By going to the address Case.net, people can read the docket, filings and other schedules.

Syman said case.net could be accessed off the main page: [www.osca.state.mo.us](http://www.osca.state.mo.us)

McClure said the system would be beneficial to attorneys and the public. She said it would also speed up her monthly reporting to the state.

McClure said Jackson County was already mostly computerized with its duties.

### Funding

The court automation project has been funded since Senate bill 420 was approved in 1994, Syman said. The bill added a \$7 charge to filing cases. The charge pays for the automation and the Court Automation Committee to direct it.

Syman said with just the \$7 fee, statewide court automation is estimated to be completed by 2004.

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## Online: Jackson County second electronic court in Missouri

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After the case management system worked so well in the pilot program in Montgomery County, the Missouri General Assembly approved an additional \$7 million this summer to speed up the process with a completion deadline of 2001.

Syman said the funding went to setting up the system, researching what was needed and the software. She said most counties are responsible for the computer equipment needed, though the state has assisted with some equipment.

McClure said some of the equipment for Jackson County is new, but was scheduled to be replaced anyway because it was becoming obsolete.

Syman said in counties with fewer than seven people working at the courts, a federal grant helped with the equipment.

### Electronic filing

In the future, Jackson County

will become the pilot program for electronic filing, Syman said. Attorneys will be able to file cases or appeals from their law offices and others will be able to pull up the electronically filed documents and read them.

Associate Circuit Court Judge William F. Mauer in Division 7 should be the first judge to have electronic filing, Syman said.

Mauer said he has met with lawyers for input. He said the hope was to eventually have a paperless court.

"Its success depends on if lawyers will use it," Mauer said. Mauer should be online by spring.

"A lot of this stuff is still in the planning," Syman said.

She said if filed traditionally, documents have to be scanned to get online, and that process is still in the research stage.

### Decisions online

Since 1996, all Missouri Su-

preme Court and appellate court decisions have appeared online as soon as they are handed down, Syman said.

She said the statewide system would also support the Judicial Information Network. The network will share the databases of 2,000 users including Missouri Supreme Court and appellate court judges.

She said juvenile offices would also be linked. The links would allow an officer in one city to contact every other officer in the state to check on a juvenile with one e-mail, rather than dozens of calls to follow-up on information including prior offenses.

Syman said automation would aid media the most. When the media check up on a case, they could do so from their office either by name, case number or date. Currently they can only do so by visiting or calling the courthouse with the proper case number, Syman said.

# Survey Featured in "Government Technology" September 1998

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<b>MISSOURI</b>	<b>1998 Score (Scale = 100)</b>	<b>1997 Score (Scale = 100)</b>	<b>1998 National Ranking</b>	<b>1997 National Ranking</b>
Digital Democracy	75	71	12	7
Higher Education	53	22	36	46
K-12 Education	89	44	6	19
Business Regulation	83	58	4	7
Taxation	73	67	15	7
Social Services	63	42	7	11
Law Enforcement / Courts	73	60	5	3
Other Initiatives	93	73	7	27
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>#3 Out of 50 States</b>	<b>#9 Out of 50 States</b>

Missouri continues its climb into the elite digital states, moving from number nine in last year's survey to take the third position Overall in *The Digital State 1998*. It finished in the Top Ten of six categories and the only area in which it finished in the bottom half of the states was Higher Education.

One of Missouri's success stories has been in the area of Law Enforcement and the Courts, where the state implemented an integrated system to link together all the state's courts. In the Social Services category, citizens may search for jobs on-line and can navigate their way through state's Web site with ease using the Missouri State Government Web Search system.

At present, more than 76 percent of Missouri schools are connected to the Internet and the number of students per multimedia computer is lower than the national average. Additionally, perspective residents, parents, and other Web visitors will find a state report card on all public schools in Missouri.

## Law Enforcement and the Courts

Law Enforcement and the Courts is one of the most vibrant areas of digital technology implementation, perhaps because the opportunities are so great and because so little has been accomplished to date.

Police departments have begun using the Web as means to raise awareness of threats to public safety, such as gangs. State web sites are also communicating information on legal matters, such as how individuals go about collecting delinquent child support payments.

Rank	State	Points
1	Wisconsin	87
2	Maryland	83
2	Minnesota	80
4	Utah	80
5	Missouri	73
6	Nine states are tied with 67 points	

But perhaps the most prominent area of focus in this category concerns the integration of existing databases. States that do create a singular interface provide a resource that enables attorneys, law enforcement personnel, and other officials to access information from various agencies in real-time. For instance, Minnesota has employed a digital network with approximately 3,000 Mobile Digital Terminals in state, county and city squad cars that connect patrol officers to the state's extensive integrated criminal justice communication network. Similarly, a pilot program in Durham, North Carolina aims to put mobile computers in each police patrol car, enabling officers to query both state and national databases for information such as vehicle registration, gun registration, stolen property, and information on warrants.

### BEST PRACTICES

UTAH - [www.pa.ex.state.ut.us/city/bel](http://www.pa.ex.state.ut.us/city/bel)

The state of Utah is assisting in the development of the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS), an initiative being led by the FBI. This database will maintain a national collection of convicted offender DNA profiles, functioning in a similar manner as an AFIS. The Forensic Biology Section of the state's Division of Law Enforcement and Technical Services is applying various collection and identification techniques to ensure the highest quality DNA information is captured for the system. Presently, several states have passed laws authorizing the collection of DNA samples from sexual offenders and individuals that commit serious crimes. Utah's efforts will benefit citizens throughout the country by providing law enforcement entities with access to a state-of-the-art criminal identification database.